

prizewinning film about contemporary quiltmakers, *Quilts in Women's Lives*, they isolated nine categories which seem

cumstances — a quilt completed on the rainy day when the quiltmaker's husband, her "last remaining friend," died,

But the most revealing section of the exhibition, in terms of women's lives, is titled education. Here, there are

there's so much to talk about while looking at *American Quilts: A Hand-made Legacy*. □

## FILM

### Looking for Gems

San Francisco / Janis Crystal Lipzin and Caroline Savage-Lee

The Third Annual San Francisco Art Institute Film Festival, which took place March 5 through March 7, once again presented an opportunity to confront the problematic place of artists' films within a film festival context. This festival mirrored others which are not reliable gauges of the state-of-the-art for two reasons. First, the most compelling and challenging films are frequently not entered, and secondly, the judges generally favor works that are easily comprehensible and which refer to well-established modes of film vocabulary.

Most of the works in the SFAI festival were shallow, insubstantial and fatuous, particularly the adolescent ravings of Ralph Records' *Hello Skinny*, the trite misogyny of Andy Anderson's *Ritual*, and Michael Emery's *Obstructions*, embarrassingly derivative of Maya Deren. Two nonfiction films, Lambert Yam's artfully executed *On the Tracks* and Les Blank's promotion of an engaging subject, *Werner Herzog Eats His Shoe*, were obviously not conceived as art objects

and more appropriately belong on public television.

Several films looked more like art. Among the animated films, or those composed frame-by-frame, were Karen Barbour's *Untitled*, characterized by facile drawing and a questionable soundtrack, Doug Haynes' ambitious but anachronistic *Common Loss*, A. Lee Crowell's nostalgic romance, *Dear Delight*, and *Zoo Rex*, an unresolved exploration of photographic process by Thomas Magno and Bruce Johnson. Others attempted more original manipulation of the medium. Eric Seibert's *Umbra* used slide projection to confound the line between object and illusion without achieving cohesion of disparate elements. Kit Hellmann's film, *7/5*, combined enigmatic imagery in a systemic construct that alluded to serial music. Also musical in structure was Michael Wallin's *Fearful Symmetry*. Inspired by the work of Joel Singer, Wallin produced a stunning and rhythmic pattern of landscapes.



Michael Wallin, stills from "Fearful Symmetry," film, at the San Francisco Art Institute Film Festival.

Sandra Davis' *Maternal Filigree* was a seductive almanac of lyrical film devices. This "Don't I know you from somewhere?" impression derived from images reminiscent of Gunvor Nelson, Stan Brakhage, James Broughton, Barbara Linkevitch and Linda Connor. The strengths of the work lay in its arresting light quality and evocative texture.

The most authentic works on the program were Vincent Grenier's *Closer Outside*, Robert Rayher's *Yelling Fire*, Bastian Cleve's *Labyrinth*, Sharon Couzin's *Deutschland Spiegel* and Alan Berliner's *City Limits*. The Grenier film

returned to the magical spirit of Melies in its transformation of objects and figures revealed and concealed by light. The mysteries of photographed reality were unraveled with breathtaking elegance. Rayher's work was an energetic, physical assault on film, with an anecdotal soundtrack whose function was unclear yet compelled one to listen and to look.

In Cleve's film, as the filmed scenes of India moved vertically along the screen, the mechanism (five filmstrips) that carried their reality was revealed. Cleve maintained a counterpoint between rep-

*Continued on next page*



lightweight tablets which measure about a foot square (though many are rectan-

tions in the glazing of the surfaces. A tablet may vary subtly from off-white to a

or rectangular tablets. The only "Untitled" in the show is composed of two square tablets at the usual spacing of several inches apart, plus a smaller, irregularly-shaped tablet set farther to the right. Similarly, *Study for Splay* is made up of three fragments, smaller than usual at about seven inches square, which more consciously involve less frontal viewing angles by incorporating the sides of each tablet to a greater extent. The effect is as if central sections were broken and cut away from larger tablets. The latest work on view is an even greater departure in certain ways. Two tablets, one square and one rectan-

developments hold even greater promise. □

## Keep In Touch With Art...

- ☐ One year: \$16
- ☐ Two years: \$31
- ☐ Three years: \$46
- ☐ Institutions: \$18/year
- ☐ Outside U.S. add postage: \$9/year
- ☐ All payments in U.S. dollars only.
- ☐ Payment enclosed: \$
- ☐ Bill me

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Apt. No. \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

## Subscribe to ARTWEEK

Clip and mail to: ARTWEEK, 1305 Franklin Street, Oakland CA 94612  
Allow 4-6 weeks.

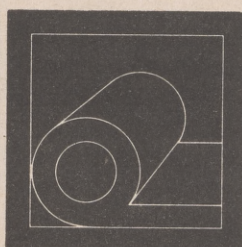
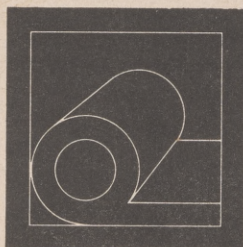
## Looking for Gems, continued

resentation and its means while also evoking questions about relative filmed time. In Couzin's work, the haunting quality of her rich text evoked levels of memory in quite an unexpected manner, and the words combined with the histori-

cal footage of Germany to produce startling allusions. More than any film purporting to be about dream states, this one possessed a genuine surreal quality. Berliner's work was a visual and aural feast utilizing stock documentary footage, segments from Hollywood melodramas and environmental occurrences in conjunction and disjunction with a tactile sound text. Rather than gaining its strength from prior well-articulated cinematic conventions, the film moved through quirky juxtapositions, taking intelligent risks. □

*Janis Crystal Lipzin teaches film-making at the San Francisco Art Institute. Caroline Savage-Lee, a photographer and filmmaker, has previously covered film for ARTWEEK.*

## YOUR ADVERTISING PLAYS TWO ROLES IN THE APRIL 25 ARTWEEK



*In addition to reaching subscribers in April, this issue will be distributed May 14-19 at ART 1981 CHICAGO, the exciting new international expo that is drawing attendance from across the U.S. and Europe.*

*Please reserve ad space by April 3 (ad and payment to follow by April 10).*

*For space reservation, rates or other information, contact Lory Poulson, 415-763-0422.*